

IF IT SHOULD BEAR FRUIT

AS WE GATHER

How then shall we live? What a profound question for Christians to consider midway through Lent! The Lord has shown His mercy to us, forgiven our sins, and delivered us from death. Then what? What is the focus of our lives? The call of the Readings for this Sunday points us to the repentance that bears the good fruit of God's kingdom. Like trees that have failed to produce good fruit, the Lord has tended us with His Word, with the warning of the Law and the promise of the Gospel. But if the tree remains unfruitful, the tree will have to be cut down. It is a hard word to hear, but God remains merciful, and most of all, He seeks that we bear the good fruits of faith and repentance in our daily lives.

PREPARATION

OPENING HYMN "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS"

#809



1 Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;
2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest,
3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,



There is no shad - ow of turn - ing with Thee.
Sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove
Thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide;



Thou chang - est not: Thy com - pas - sions, they fail not;
Join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness
Strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row,



As Thou hast been, Thou for - ev - er wilt be.
To Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
Bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!



Great is Thy faith - ful - ness! Great is Thy faith - ful - ness!



Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see;



All I have need - ed Thy hand hath pro - vid - ed;

WORD

INTROIT

Psalm 5:4–8; antiphon: Psalm 1:6

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.
For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.
The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.
You destroy those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.
But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.
Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

KYRIE

LSB 204

C Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.
O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DAY

P Though the Readings for the Third Sunday in Lent bring warnings to those who refuse the Spirit and remain impenitent, they also promise that God will work in us the healthful Spirit of His grace, forgive our sins, and equip us to bear the good fruits of His kingdom in our lives. From the prophet Ezekiel, we learn that God finds no pleasure in judging the wicked but rejoices in their repentance and

faith. From 1 Corinthians, we are warned by Paul against the pride that goes before the fall and assured that in Christ temptation cannot overcome us. In the Gospel, Jesus is confronted with a tragedy from the news and points the hearers to their own repentance and faith, that they may bear the good fruit of His Kingdom.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Ezekiel 33:7–20

⁷“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

¹⁰“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ ¹¹Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

¹²“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. ¹³Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. ¹⁴Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, ¹⁵if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ¹⁶None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

¹⁷“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. ¹⁸When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. ¹⁹And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by them. ²⁰Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

¹I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

⁵Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat

down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”⁸We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents,¹⁰nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.¹¹Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.¹²Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.¹³No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

VERSE

2 Peter 3:9b, c

[The Lord] is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the thirteenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹There were some present at that very time who told [Jesus] about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.²And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

⁶And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.⁷And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’⁸And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.⁹Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY “MAY GOD BESTOW ON US HIS GRACE”

#823



1 May God be-stow on us His grace, With bless-ings rich pro-
 2 Thine o - ver all shall be the praise And thanks of ev - 'ry
 △ 3 O let the peo-ple praise Thy worth, In all good works in -



vide us; And may the bright-ness of His face
 na - tion; And all the world with joy shall raise
 creas - ing; The land shall plen - teous fruit bring forth,



To life e - ter - nal guide us, That we His
 The voice of ex - ul - ta - tion. For Thou shalt
 Thy Word is rich in bless - ing. May God the



sav - ing health may know, His gra - cious will and plea - sure,
 judge the earth, O Lord, Nor suf - fer sin to flour - ish;
 Fa - ther, God the Son, And God the Spir - it bless us!



And al - so to the na-tions show Christ's rich - es with-out
 Thy peo-ple's pas - ture is Thy Word Their souls to feed and
 Let all the world praise Him a - lone, Let sol - emn awe pos -



mea - sure And un - to God con - vert them.
 nour - ish, In rich - teous paths to keep them.
 sess us. Now let our hearts say, “A - men!”

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87, alt.

Tune: Der Lxvj, Deus Misereatur, 1524, Magdeburg

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

CREED

Nicene Creed

**☐ I believe in one God,
 the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth
 and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only-begotten Son of God,
 begotten of His Father before all worlds,
 God of God, Light of Light,
 very God of very God,
 begotten, not made,**

being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Restore us, O Lord, according to Your promise, and hear the prayers of Your people who cry to You in need.

Blessed Lord, it is Your good and gracious will not to condemn but to save the sinner through the merits of Christ alone. Open our hearts to the voice of Your call, lead us to repentance, and grant us Your Holy Spirit so that we may show forth the good fruits of that repentance in our lives. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, we live in a world filled with temptation, fear, and threat. Grant us a refuge in Your Word that our hearts may not despair. Deliver us from all our enemies and bring us to everlasting life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Merciful Lord, the tragedies and disasters of this life unsettle our hearts and feed our anxieties. Remind us of Your great compassion and faithfulness, and support the victims of such events as well as the emergency personnel who imperil themselves on our behalf. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious God, our world cries out in search of hope; grant to those who preach Your Word the grace to proclaim it faithfully, and bless the missionaries far and near who bring Your Gospel to those who sit in the darkness of sin and death. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Lord God, bless us with good and faithful leaders who will hear and heed Your Word. Move us to have compassion on the oppressed, to seek justice for those who suffer wrongly, and to sustain goodness in our life and conduct. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Deliver, O Lord, the sick from their afflictions, the sorrowing from their grief, the troubled in mind from depression, and the dying from fear. Hear us *especially for Hedy, Jean, Kathleen, Ray, Sallyann, Wally, Dana, Kaylee, Jean, Jen, John, Leah, Rod and Kevin* and for all who cry to You in need. Hear us for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Blessed Lord, You have given us the comfort of Your Word and the food of Your Son's body and blood that we may be sustained in trial and strengthened in faith. Forgiven by Your mercy, grant us Your Holy Spirit that we show forth in holy lives our Savior, whom we here receive upon our lips. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

Additional petitions may be inserted here.

P Holy Lord, all things are Yours and yet You show Your great mercy in giving us all we need for this life and for eternal life. Give us also a grateful heart, so that we may respond with gratitude and return to You the tithes and offerings You are due for all Your kindness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray.

C **Amen.**

SACRAMENT

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

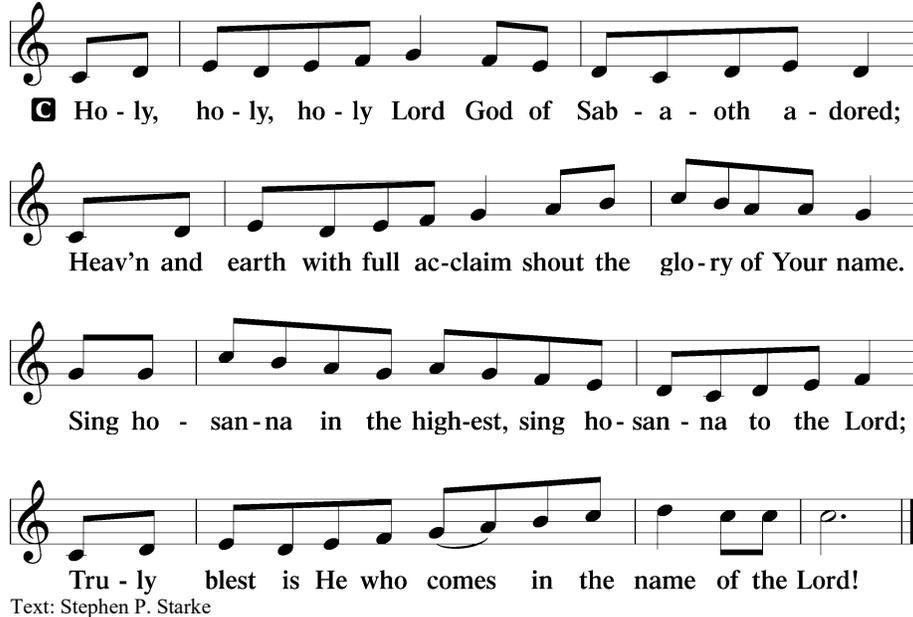
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

LSB 208



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;
Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.
Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;
Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Text: Stephen P. Starke

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

- P** O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD’S PRAYER

- C** Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

PAX DOMINI

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

AGNUS DEI

LSB 210

C 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;
O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

DISTRIBUTION

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P Let us pray.
Merciful God, for freedom You have set us free through Christ's liberating death and resurrection. In this freedom, teach us to live in the fruit of the Spirit given us in our Baptism that we may bear in our bodies the fulfillment of the Law as we love our neighbors as ourselves; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

C Thanks be to God.

CLOSING HYMN "GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT REDEEMER"

#918

1 Guide me, O Thou great Re - deem - er, Pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain Whence the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious
bar - ren land. I am weak, but Thou art might - y;
stream doth flow; Let the fi - ery, cloud - y pil - lar
fears sub - side; Death of death and hell's de - struc - tion,
Hold me with Thy pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en,
Lead me all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer,
Land me safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es,
bread of heav - en, Feed me till I want no
strong de - liv - 'rer, Be Thou still my strength and
songs of prais - es I will ev - er give to
more; Feed me till I want no more.
shield; Be Thou still my strength and shield.
Thee; I will ev - er give to Thee.

Text: William Williams, 1717–91, abr.; (st. 1): tr. Peter Williams, 1722–96, alt.; (sts. 2–3): tr. William Williams, 1717–91

Tune: John Hughes, 1873–1932

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